



Arbitration CAS 2018/A/5658 Rochell G.D. Woodson v. Former President, Former Vice Presidents and all Former Members of the Executive Committee of the Liberia Football Association (LFA) and the LFA Elections Committee, award of 17 January 2019 (operative part of 7 September 2018)

Panel: Mr Hans Nater (Switzerland), Sole Arbitrator

Football

Elections to the executive body of a national federation

Defense of CAS lack of jurisdiction

Time limit to file an appeal

Standing to appeal

1. According to Article R55(1) of the CAS Code, any defence of lack of jurisdiction shall be submitted by the Respondent with its answer. If the Respondent did not raise such defence with its answer but only in a second round of submission, the defense of lack of jurisdiction has not been timely raised.
2. The time limit set out in article 49 of the CAS Code is to be considered as preclusive in nature and must be reviewed *ex officio*.
3. The plea relating to the lack of standing to appeal relates to the merits of the case. A fundamental principle of law is that the appealing party must have a manifest interest in the dispute. A party has standing to appeal if it has an interest worthy of protection, i.e. if it can show a sufficient legal interest in the matter being appealed. In other words, an appellant has to demonstrate that he or she is sufficiently affected by the appealed decision and has a tangible interest, of financial or sporting nature at stake. Accordingly, the CAS dismisses appeals for lack of standing to appeal if the appellant is not directly affected by the decision at issue.

I. THE PARTIES

1. Ms Rochell G.D. Woodson (the “Appellant”) was elected as a member of the Liberia Football Association (“LFA”) Executive Committee in March 2010 and was re-elected for a second 4 year-term in March 2014.
2. In her first submission, the Appellant directed her appeal against the Former President, the Former Vice Presidents and all Former Members of the Executive Committee of the Liberia Football Association and the LFA Elections Committee. In her second submission, the

Appellant directed her appeal against the Liberia Football Association (the “LFA”). The LFA is the official governing body of the sport of football in Liberia. Its seat is in Monrovia, Liberia.

II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

3. Below is a summary of the relevant facts and allegations based on the Parties’ written submissions and evidence adduced. References to additional facts and allegations found in the Parties’ written submissions and evidence will be made, where relevant, in connection with the legal analysis that follows. While the Sole Arbitrator has considered all the facts, allegations, legal arguments, and evidence submitted by the Parties in the present proceedings, he refers in his award only to the submissions and evidence he deems necessary to explain his reasoning.
4. In her Appeal brief, the Appellant brings an appeal against the decisions of the *Executive Committee* of the LFA for illegally amending the Statutes of the LFA without any approval from the Congress and for overstaying their statutory mandate. In her second submission, the Appellant submits that the Appeal is against a decision of the LFA’s *Electoral Committee* and the subsequent elections by the LFA’s Congress on 14 April 2018.
5. On 22 February 2018, the LFA Executive Committee convened an extraordinary LFA Congress to be held on 24 February 2018 aiming at electing the LFA’s Electoral Committee and other judicial bodies of the LFA. This extraordinary Congress was intended to prepare the ordinary Congress to be called later with the purpose to elect the new Executive Committee of the LFA.
6. On 24 February 2018, all nominated judicial bodies were confirmed by the extraordinary Congress.
7. On 27 February 2018, the LFA’s Executive Committee held a meeting, during which it discussed certain eligibility criteria for the upcoming elections. In particular, the Executive Committee decided (i) to set the minimum age requirement for Executive Committee members (including the President and Vice President) to 25 years, and (ii) to limit the number of nominations required for candidates to run for election on the Executive Committee to one club or person.
8. On 8 March 2018, the LFA’s Executive Committee held another meeting during which it issued guidelines for the upcoming elections. During this meeting, the Executive Committee set the number of nominations required for candidates to run for the Executive Committee elections to five nominations for the position as president and to three nominations for the positions as one of the two vice presidents and other members of the Executive Committee. In addition, the Executive Committee agreed that a candidate for presidency was not required to have served as President of one of the LFA Member organization within the last two years and that a candidate for the position as vice president must hold a baccalaureate degree like a presidential candidate.

9. On 9 March 2018, the LFA's Electoral Committee released the 2018 elections Guidelines and circulated them to all candidates. These Guidelines provided *inter alia* (i) that presidential and vice-presidential candidates are required to have at least five nominations from stakeholders while Executive Committee candidates are expected to have at least one nomination, and (ii) that presidential candidates must be at least 25 years old.
10. By letter dated 16 March 2018, the Appellant and Mr Wallace Weiah, another member of the LFA's Executive Committee, protested against the electoral process. By letter dated 20 March 2018, the Electoral Committee rejected the protest of the Appellant and Mr Weiah, referring to the minutes of the LFA Executive Committee's meeting held on 27 February 2018, in which the Appellant had participated without objecting to the decisions made with regard to the upcoming elections.
11. By letter dated 22 March 2018, the Appellant registered a complaint with the Chair Person of the LFA Board of Arbitration. The Chair Person rejected the Appellant's claim on the grounds that the LFA Board of Arbitration lacked jurisdiction to rule on elections matters.
12. On 23 March 2018, the LFA Electoral Committee circulated a list with candidates eligible for election, which did not contain the name of the Appellant.
13. On 14 April 2018, the ordinary electoral Congress of the LFA took place. The Congress elected ten members of the Executive Committee and two Vice-Presidents. The Appellant was not one of those elected members.

III. PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

14. On 5 April 2018, the Appellant filed her Statement of Appeal in accordance with Article R47 *et seq* of the Code of Sports-related Arbitration (the "Code"). In her Statement of Appeal, the Appellant requested that this procedure be referred to a Sole Arbitrator.
15. On 16 April 2018, the Appellant filed its Appeal Brief in accordance with Article R51 of the Code.
16. By e-mails dated 18 April 2018 and 20 April 2018, the Appellant filed a new document, claiming that it constitutes an injunction order by a Liberian Court upon an application allegedly by Mr George Soto, candidate for the LFA presidency. By letter dated 24 April 2018, the CAS Court Office forwarded these e-mails and the new document to Respondents, inviting them to respond to the Appellant's remarks in their answer to the extent the Respondents wish to do so.
17. On 30 April 2018, the LFA filed the Answer in accordance with Article R51 of the Code.
18. On 10 May 2018, the Appellant requested the Sole Arbitrator to issue an award based solely on the Parties' written submissions. By letter dated 11 May 2018, the LFA requested a hearing to be held.

19. On 10 July 2018, the CAS Court Office, on behalf of the President of the Appeals Arbitration Division, confirmed the appointment of Dr. Hans Nater, Attorney-at-law in Zurich, Switzerland as Sole Arbitrator.
20. On 31 July 2018, the CAS Court Office, following consultation with the Parties, informed the Parties that there will be a second round of submission in lieu of a hearing. Consequently, the Appellant was invited to file a further submission with a deadline of 20 days.
21. On 8 August 2018, the Appellant submitted its second submission together with new exhibits. The next day, 9 August 2018, the Respondents were invited to comment on the Appellant's second submission within a deadline of 20 days.
22. On 28 August 2018, the LFA submitted "additional Respondent Re-submission documents".
23. On 29 August 2018, the CAS Court Office invited the Respondents to confirm whether the documents attached to their submission of 28 August 2018 was their entire submission.
24. On 29 August 2018, the LFA submitted further comments to the Appellant's second submission.
25. On 29 August 2018, the LFA informed the CAS Court Office that it would send its original reply submission (and exhibits) to the CAS Court Office by DHL.
26. On 3 September 2018, the CAS Court Office invited the Respondents and/or the LFA to provide proof of timely filing their original reply submission.
27. On 4 September 2018, the CAS Court Office confirmed to the parties the receipt of the Respondents' e-mail dated 3 September 2018 enclosing a copy of the DHL shipment -invoice dated 31 August 2018 regarding their supplemental submission. Moreover, the CAS Court Office acknowledged receipt of the Respondents' reply to the Appellant's second submission by courier. Considering that the Respondents only provided one copy, the CAS Court Office requested the Respondents to complete its filing by sending the required number of copies to the CAS Court Office, advancing a copy by e-mail.
28. On 4 September 2018 and 5 September 2018, the Respondents sent further documents to the CAS Court Office. Since the attachments to the e-mails could not be accessed, the CAS Court Office informed the Parties to wait for the original documents to arrive by courier before notifying such documents to the Appellant.
29. By letter dated 5 September 2018, the Appellant reserved her right to be heard on any new arguments raised by the LFA in its second submission, to the extent the Sole Arbitrator considers any such new arguments to render the Award. Enclosed with the Appellant's letter was a signed Order of Procedure.
30. The Respondents did not sign or return the Order of Procedure, or otherwise object to its contents.

31. By letter dated 10 September 2018, the CAS Court Office acknowledged receipt of a duplicate original of the Respondents' second submission and forwarded a copy of it to the Appellant.

IV. SUBMISSIONS OF THE PARTIES

A. The Appellant's prayers for relief and position

32. In her Appeal Brief, the Appellant submitted the following requests for relief:

"Wherefore and in view of the foregoing, appellant prays your honor and this Honorable Appeal Chamber of the Court of Arbitration for Sports to declare the LFA 2018 elections void ab initio for the numerous statutory violation and to grant unto me, (Appellant) every relief deemed just, legal and equitable and have the said LFA 2018 Elections re-run to enable me fully participate in a legal LFA election, after all the corrections are made by a siting legitimate body, the congress".

33. In her second submission, the Appellant submitted the following amended requests for relief:

"For the foregoing reasons, the Appellant, Mrs. Woodson, respectfully requests that the Sole Arbitrator appointed by the CAS:

- a) DECLARE that the elections of the LFA Executive Committee were invalid and are cancelled.*
- b) DECLARE that the Executive Committee elected in March 2014 is to continue to act and carry out its function until a new Executive Committee is elected by the LFA Congress in accordance with the applicable LFA Statutes.*
- c) ORDER the Liberia Football Association to organize a new election of the Executive Committee in strict compliance with the applicable LFA Statutes and LFA Electoral Code.*
- d) ORDER the Liberia Football Association to reimburse their registration fees to candidates who ran in the 14 April 2018 Executive Committee elections.*
- e) ORDER the Liberia Football Association to pay USD 4,500 to Ms. Woodson as due Executive Committee honorarium.*
- f) AWARD Ms. Woodson all costs incurred in relation to these proceedings.*
- g) GRANT Ms. Woodson any other or additional relief deemed appropriate".*

34. The Appellant's submissions, in essence, may be summarized as follows:

- The Executive Committee of the LFA amended the eligibility criteria, namely with regard to the minimum age requirement and with the number of nominations a candidate requires, provided by the LFA Statutes without any approval from the LFA Congress and set a date for the elections in violations of the LFA Statutes. Consequently, the elections held by the LFA Congress on 14 April 2018 are invalid and void and the former Executive Committee,

elected in March 2014, must be reinstated until a new election is convened in accordance with the LFA Statutes.

- The elections guidelines violate the LFA Statutes.
- The Executive Committee members' terms, in particular the Appellant's term, ended on 26 March 2018. Consequently, the members of the Executive Committee overstayed their statutory mandate. Considering that the elections dated 14 April 2018 are invalid, the members of the Executive Committee elected in 2014 shall be reinstated and continue to carry out their function.
- The Appellant realized upon receipt of the Elections Guidelines that the Electoral Committee intended to organize an election based on eligibility criteria that diverge from those set out in the LFA Statutes without first convening a Congress to amend the Statutes. She had drawn the LFA Executive Committee's attention already earlier to the fact that the LFA Executive Committee could not amend the eligibility criteria set out in the LFA Statutes.
- The LFA's first vice president, Mr Musa Shannon, has been the acting president of the LFA since August 2017. This position conflicts with him being an aspirant for the LFA presidency.
- The ordinary LFA Congress dated 14 April 2018 was not validly convened.
- The members of the 2014 elected LFA Executive Committee shall be reinstated and the LFA shall organize a new election for the entire LFA Executive Committee, in line with the eligibility and procedural requirements set out in the 2018 LFA Statutes and the Electoral Code.
- The LFA owes to Appellant an outstanding honorarium of USD 4'500 for her services as Executive Member of the LFA.

B. The LFA's prayers for relief and position

35. The officers mentioned in the Appellant's first submission did not make any submissions. On the Respondents' side, all submissions to the CAS were made by the LFA, although the LFA submitted not to be a party.
36. In their Answer, the LFA submitted the following requests for relief:

“Respondent pray your Honour and the Appeal Chambers of the Court of Arbitration for Sports that the Appellant appealed be denied, and dismissed on grounds that she lacks capacity to appeal on a process that she is not a party nor a participant in the process and whatsoever violations she believed are discovered within the LFA Approved 2017 Revised Statutes has no bearing on her and she suffered no harm and grant unto Respondent every relief deemed just, equitable and legal and ensure the validity of the LFA 2018 elections since no member of the thirty-four (34) congress delegates voted against the congress agenda”.

37. In their second submission, the LFA submitted the following amended requests for relief:

“Wherefore and in view of the foregoing facts and circumstances, Respondent most respectfully prays your Honor the Sole Judge and the Honorable Court of Arbitration for Sports to deny and dismiss Appellant’s appeal as though it was never filed before you and grant unto Respondent any and all other relief your Honor may deem just and equitable as follows:

1. *Dismiss and deny Appellant’s appeal on grounds that CAS lacks jurisdiction. In that the Appellant failed, neglected and refused to have exhausted all of the judicial remedies available to the appellant by not appealing to the LFA Elections Appeal Committee when her appeal was denied and dismissed by the LFA Elections Committee; instead of writing the LFA Arbitration Tribunal who has no jurisdiction over LFA electoral process;*
2. *Declare the 14 April 2018 LFA Executive Committee elections valid, since in fact based on the request of the Appellant, FIFA intervened and has approved the elections of the Executive Committee members elected;*
3. *Dismiss and deny the plead of the Appellant to reinstate the 2014 Executive Committee as their tenure expired on 27 March 2018; as they were elected Executive Committee Members on March 28, 2014 and not Elected March 27 2014;*
4. *Uphold all FIFA decisions, instructions and mandates to which the Respondent (LFA) has carryout in order to ease the conflict; as FIFA upheld, that since the Executive Committee elections were completed prior to the conflict that drag football matter to ordinary court, only the Presidential elections which run-off was not completed, must be reorganized;*
5. *Uphold the Respondent’s commitment made to the Appellant in writing in relations to the payment of her honorarium;*
6. *Award ruling in favour of Respondent and all costs associated with the proceedings;*
7. *And grant unto Respondent (LFA) every relief deemed just, equitable, legal, and appropriate and in collaboration with FIFA actions that validated the 14 April 2018 election”.*

38. The LFA’s submissions, in essence, may be summarized as follows:

- The Appellant attended the meetings of the Executive Committee where the eligibility requirements were discussed and determined, without making any objection(s) whatsoever. The Appellant, therefore, forfeited any appeal right(s).
- The Appellant did not register for the election process in accordance with the guidelines of which she was a part of the making. Moreover, the Appellant did not attend the elections dated 14 April 2018. As a consequence, she suffered neither harm nor any consequences and is, therefore, not entitled to appeal against the elections.
- The LFA Executive Committee has no authority to make or create election eligibility criteria.

- The Appellant never objected to the action(s) or drew the LFA Executive Committee's attention to any violation(s) of the LFA Statutes as she attended every meeting of the LFA Executive Committee and participated prior to the release of the electoral code.
- The Appellant, together with Mr Wallace Weiah, filed a complaint to the Elections Committee and failed, refused and neglected, thereafter, to take advantage of the appeal process in keeping with Article 12 of the LFA Electoral Code.
- There were no objection(s) on any candidate except the presidential candidate on the LFA Congress' elections dated 14 April 2018.
- The LFA Elections Committee cannot call a new electoral LFA Congress because it lacks the statutory authority.
- The 2014 elected LFA Executive Committee cannot be reinstated since their terms expired in 27 March 2018 in accordance with Article 45.2 of the LFA Statutes. Moreover, a new Executive Committee had been elected at the LFA Congress dated 14 April 2018.
- The Appellant's claim for an outstanding honorarium of USD 4'500 is not contested. However, the delay for the payment is not something to be brought to CAS.

V. JURISDICTION

39. Article R47 of the Code provides the following:

"An appeal against the decision of a federation, association or sports-related body may be filed with CAS if the statutes or regulations of the said body so provide or if the parties have concluded a specific arbitration agreement and if the Appellant has exhausted the legal remedies available to him prior to the appeal, in accordance with the statutes or regulations of that body.

An appeal may be filed with CAS against an award rendered by CAS acting as a first instance tribunal if such appeal has been expressly provided by the rules of the federation or sports-body concerned".

40. Article 87 of the LFA Statutes reads as follows:

"In accordance with the relevant FIFA Statutes provisions, any appeal against a final and binding LFA decision shall be heard by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland [...]"

41. Article R55(1) of the Code provides the following:

"Within twenty days from the receipt of the grounds for the appeal, the Respondent shall submit to the CAS Court Office an answer containing:

[...]

- *any defence of lack of jurisdiction;*

[...]”.

42. In its Answer, the LFA did not raise any defence of lack of jurisdiction. In its second submission, the LFA raised the defence of lack of jurisdiction. In the light of Article R55 of the Code, the LFA’s defence of lack of jurisdiction has not been timely raised.
43. Nevertheless, in consideration of Article 87 of the LFA Statutes and applicable law, it follows that CAS has jurisdiction to decide the present dispute.

VI. ADMISSIBILITY

44. Article 87 of the LFA Statutes does not provide for a time limit within which an appeal to the CAS must be filed. Consequently, Article R49 of the Code applies, which reads as follows:

“In the absence of a time limit set in the statutes or regulations of the federation, association or sports-related body concerned, or in a previous agreement, the time limit for appeal shall be twenty-one days from the receipt of the decision appealed against”.

45. In her second submission, the Appellant outlines the remedies she had taken against the decisions of the LFA Executive Committee dated 27 February 2018 and 8 March 2018, the communication of the LFA Electoral Committee dated 9 March 2018 and/or the elections by the LFA’s Congress on 14 April 2018. On 16 March 2018, she addressed *“a written letter of protest to the LFA Elections Committee against the electoral process”*, which was rejected by the LFA Elections’ Committee for lack of authority to address allegations regarding elections’ irregularities. On 20 March 2018, the Appellant requested the Chair Person of the LFA Board of Arbitration *“to register her complaint against the gross violations of the LFA Statutes in the on-going LFA elections process”*, which was also rejected again for lack of jurisdiction.
46. The LFA did not submit that the Appellant failed to meet the time limit provided by Article R49 of the Code with regard to her appeal against the decisions of the LFA Executive Committee dated 27 February 2018 and 8 March 2018, the communication of the LFA Electoral Committee dated 9 March 2018 and/or the elections by the LFA’s Congress on 14 April 2018. The time limit set out in article 49 of the Code is to be considered as preclusive in nature and must be reviewed *ex officio* (ARROYO M. [ed.], *Arbitration in Switzerland, The Practitioner’s Guide*, 2nd Ed., n. 4 at Art. 49).
47. The Sole Arbitrator notes that the Appellant filed her Appeal on 5 April 2018, i.e. before the elections took place at the LFA Congress scheduled for 14 April 2018. The Sole Arbitrator has serious doubts whether it is at all possible to launch an appeal against a decision or an election before it takes place.
48. Even if the Sole Arbitrator considered the Appeal against the decisions by the LFA Executive Committee, the LFA Electoral Committee and the Congress admissible, the Appeal is to be dismissed for lack of standing of the Appellant to lodge the Appeal (see para. 52 et seq. hereinafter).

VII. APPLICABLE LAW

49. Article R58 of the CAS Code provides the following:

“The Panel shall decide the dispute according to the applicable regulations and, subsidiarily, to the rules of law chosen by the parties or, in the absence of such a choice, according to the law of the country in which the federation, association or sports-related body which has issued the challenged decision is domiciled or according to the rules of law the Panel deems appropriate. In the latter case, the Panel shall give reasons for its decision”.

50. The Panel notes that Article 45 of the LFA Statutes provides the rules with regard to the composition and election of the LFA Executive Committee. In particular, and to the extent relevant for this case, Article 45 of the LFA Statutes provides the following:

“45.3 Every candidate in the election of the President, Vice-President and Executive Committee members must be proposed by five Members. They may be re-elected if qualified as per Article 45.2 (I and II). Upon been elected into office, every member of the Executive Committee undertakes, and accepts responsibility, to faithfully, loyally and independently act in the best interests of LFA and the promotion and development of football all levels.

45.4 The President, Vice Presidents and member of the Executive Committee shall not be younger than 35 years. A candidate for the office of the President, Vice Presidents and Executive Committee Members shall have played an active role in football (e.g. as former Player, former Referee, former Coach and an Official within the LFA Etc.) for two years of the last five years before been proposed as a candidate for elections. The President, Vice Presidents and Executive Committee shall have minimum qualification of High School Diploma. They shall not have been found guilty of criminal offence. They shall have the Liberian Nationality and shall have residency within the territory.

45.5 Candidatures must be sent to the General Secretariat of the LFA. The official list of candidates must be passed to the members of the along with the agenda for the Congress at which the President, Vice Presidents and Executive Committee members will be elected”.

51. The Sole Arbitrator is prepared to proceed with his analysis based on those statutory provisions.

VIII. MERITS

A. The Main Issues

52. In view of the above, the main issues to be resolved by the Sole Arbitrator are:

- (a) Who is (are) the Respondent(s)?
- (b) Has the Appellant standing to appeal?
- (c) Are the decisions and elections invalid?

- (d) Is the LFA Executive Committee elected in March 2014 to be reinstated?
- (e) Is the Appellant entitled to a honorarium of USD 4'500?

a) *Who is (are) the Respondent(s)?*

- 53. It becomes clear from the content of the Appellant's submissions that her appeal is directed against the decisions of the LFA Executive Committee dated 27 February 2018 and 8 March 2018, the communication of the LFA Electoral Committee dated 9 March 2018 as well as against the elections of the LFA Congress dated 14 April 2018 (referred to as "elections"), and not against the individuals indicated in her first submission.
- 54. In addition, the LFA seems to understand and interpret the Appellant's submissions in the same sense, as it filed all submissions to the CAS on its own behalf.
- 55. Consequently, the Sole Arbitrator considers the LFA to be the Respondent.

b) *Has the Appellant standing to appeal?*

- 56. The Appellant's standing to appeal is contested by the Respondent.
- 57. The plea relating to the lack of standing to appeal relates to the merits of the case (cf. CAS 2009/A/1869, paras. 29 *et seq.*; CAS 2015/A/3959, para. 141 *et seq.*).
- 58. A fundamental principle of law is that the appealing party must have a manifest interest in the dispute. According to CAS jurisprudence, a party has standing to appeal if it has an interest worthy of protection, i.e. if it can show a sufficient legal interest in the matter being appealed (cf. e.g., CAS 2015/A/3959, para. 143; CAS 2013/A/3140, para. 8.3; CAS 2008/A/1674; CAS 2010/A/2354). In other words, an appellant has to demonstrate that he or she is sufficiently affected by the appealed decision and has a tangible interest, of financial or sporting nature at stake. Accordingly, the CAS dismisses appeals for lack of standing to appeal if the appellant is not directly affected by the decision at issue (cf. e.g., CAS 2008/A/1583 & 1584, para. 31, and the awards referred therein, CAS 2002/O/373; TAS 2006/A/1082-1104; CAS 2007/A/1278 & 1279).
- 59. Pursuant to Articles 14 *et seq.* of the LFA Statutes, only legal persons, clubs or institutions can be members of the LFA. The Appellant has no right to participate in the LFA Congress and to exercise voting rights pursuant to Article 22.1/A of the LFA Statutes.
- 60. The Sole Arbitrator notes that it is undisputed that the Appellant is not a member of the LFA.
- 61. Further, the Sole Arbitrator notes that it is undisputed that the Appellant did not register her candidacy for presidency with the General Secretariat of the LFA. In particular, it results from the LFA Electoral Committee's letter dated 20 March 2018 that the LFA had drawn the

Appellant's attention to the running deadline for applying for the election process. Despite this express reference, the Appellant chose not to register for and participate in the 2018 elections process. Consequently, her name was not on the official list of candidates which was passed to the members of the LFA along with the agenda for the LFA Congress pursuant to Article 45.5 of the LFA Statutes.

62. The Appellant claims that she abstained from participating in the 2018 elections until the irregularities and violations of the LFA Statutes were resolved and the process would be run in full compliance with the LFA Statutes. She expressly claims to refuse being involved in an irregular election process, despite having aspirations to run for the LFA presidency. The Appellant, therefore, expressly acknowledges that she was and is not involved in the 2018 elections process in any way.
63. The Sole Arbitrator finds it hard to understand why the Appellant, despite her aspiration for becoming the LFA's president, choose to refrain completely from participating at the 2018 elections. Rather, it could have been expected that she announces her candidacy, participates at the elections and tried to convince the LFA Congress that she would be a candidate who fulfils all elections criteria as defined by the LFA Statutes.
64. Further, it results from the minutes of the LFA Executive Committee's meetings dated 27 February 2018 and 8 March 2018 that the Appellant participated in both meetings. Consequently, the Appellant's allegation whereas she only realized upon receipt of the elections' guidelines issued by the LFA Electoral Committee on 9 March 2018 that the LFA Electoral Committee intended to organize an election based on eligibility criteria that diverge from those set out in the LFA Statutes without first convening a Congress to amend the LFA Statutes, is not accurate. It may be added that the Appellant does not claim that she did not participate at the two aforementioned Executive Committee's meetings of the LFA nor that the minutes of these meetings were incorrect with regard to the attendees recorded therein.
65. In the aforementioned minutes of the LFA Executive Committee's meetings, there is no indication and the Appellant provides no proof that any objections, in particular from the Appellant, were raised against the elections process prepared by the LFA Executive Committee and the LFA Electoral Committee. Such objection could have been expected from the Appellant, given that she claims to have drawn the LFA's Executive Committee's attention already earlier "*to the fact that the Executive Committee could not amend the eligibility criteria set out in the LFA Statutes*".
66. To summarize, the Appellant (i) is not a member of the LFA and, therefore, has no voting rights in the LFA Congress, (ii) did not register her candidacy for the elections dated 14 April 2018, and (iii) did not protest at the LFA Executive Committee's meetings dated 27 February 2018 and 8 March 2018, at which the Appellant participated and the elections criteria were fixed.
67. The Sole Arbitrator concludes, therefore, that the Appellant lacks the standing to appeal against the LFA Executive Committee's decisions dated 27 February 2018 and 8 March 2018, the LFA

Electoral Committee's communication dated 9 March 2018 as well as the LFA Congress elections dated 14 April 2018.

c) *Are the decisions and the elections invalid?*

68. The Appellant submits that the elections of the LFA Congress held on 14 April 2018 are invalid based on the following reasoning: The elections by the LFA Congress were held based on guidelines issued by the LFA Executive Committee and, subsequently, by the LFA Electoral Committee which deviate from the elections criteria provided for in the LFA Statutes.
69. The Sole Arbitrator reaches the conclusion that the issue of the invalidity of the LFA Congress elections held on 14 April 2018 may remain undecided since the Appellant lacks the legal interest in bringing the annulment of these elections.
70. For the same reasons, several further issues raised by the parties, in particular the following, may remain undecided as well: (i) whether the LFA Executive Committee has the authority to determine the elections eligibility criteria, (ii) whether the LFA Elections Committee lacks the statutory authority to call a new electoral LFA Congress, (iii) whether the different wording in Article 45.4 and Article 58.1 of the LFA Statutes constitute a contradiction within the LFA Statutes which can only be resolved by the LFA Congress or qualify as mere typographical error, (iv) whether the LFA's First Vice President, Mr. Musa Shannon, unlawfully interfered with the elections process, (v) whether the candidates elected at the LFA Congress dated 14 April 2018 comply with the requirements pursuant to the LFA Statutes, (vi) whether the ordinary LFA Congress dated 14 April 2018 was not validly convened.

d) *Is the LFA Executive Committee elected in March 2014 to be reinstated?*

71. In her first submission, the Appellant claims that her term as member of the LFA Executive Committee ended in March 2018.
72. In contrast thereto, in her second submission, the Appellant requests that the members of the LFA Executive Committee elected in March 2014 shall be reinstated and continue to carry out their function.
73. The Sole Arbitrator is of the view that there is no statutory basis for the Appellant's request. The LFA Statutes are silent on the point raised by the Appellant. The LFA Statutes contain no rule as how to proceed in case elections of the LFA Congress for members of the Executive Committee were held but invalidated thereafter, and the Appellant does not address this issue.
74. The Sole Arbitrator, therefore, concludes that even if the elections of the LFA Congress dated 14 April 2018 were to be held invalid, the Appellant's request to reinstate the LFA Executive Committee elected in March 2014 would have no statutory basis and, therefore, to be dismissed.

e) *Is the Appellant entitled to a honorarium of USD 4'500?*

75. In her second submission, the Appellant claims to be entitled of an honorarium of USD 4'500 for her activities within the LFA for eighteen months. She refers to a letter from the LFA dated 11 June 2018, where the LFA allegedly had recognized her debt.
76. In its second submission, the LFA recognises the Appellant's claim. It only submits that, due to its indebtedness, it was unable to pay the honorarium claimed by Appellant
77. The Sole Arbitrator, therefore, finds that the Appellant claim for an honorarium of USD 4'500 is to be upheld and the LFA is to be ordered to pay to the Appellant such amount.

B. Conclusion

78. The Sole Arbitrator concludes that the Appellant lacks the standing to appeal against the decisions of the LFA Executive Committee dated 27 February 2018 and 8 March 2018, the communication of the LFA Electoral Committee dated 9 March 2018 as well as against the elections held by the LFA Congress dated 14 April 2018. To this extent, the Appellant's appeal is to be dismissed.
79. With regard to the Appellant's claim for an honorarium of USD 4'500, the Sole Arbitrator concludes that the appeal is to be upheld. Consequently, the LFA is to be ordered to pay to the Appellant the amount of USD 4'500 net as requested.

ON THESE GROUNDS

The Court of Arbitration for Sport rules that:

1. It has jurisdiction to resolve the claims filed by Ms Rochell G.D. Woodson against the Liberia Football Association with respect to (i) the LFA Executive Committee decisions dated 27 February 2018 and 8 March 2018; (ii) the LFA Electoral Committee's communication dated 9 March 2018; and (iii) the LFA Congress elections dated 14 April 2018.
2. The claim filed by Ms Rochell G.D. Woodson against the Liberia Football Association with respect to (i) the LFA Executive Committee decisions dated 27 February 2018 and 8 March 2018; (ii) the LFA Electoral Committee's communication dated 9 March 2018; and (iii) the LFA Congress elections dated 14 April 2018 is dismissed.

3. The claim filed by Ms Rochell G.D. Woodson against the Liberia Football Association for payment of USD 4'500 is upheld.
4. The Liberia Football Association is ordered to pay to Ms Rochell G.D. Woodson the net amount of USD 4'500.
5. (...).
6. (...).
7. All other motions and requests for relief are dismissed.